

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS DIVISION  
ACCESSION SHEET

Accession # 41 M 127, 50 M 149, 80 M 26,  
                  \*89 M 24

Location D2-i-3

Title COGSWELL, JOSEPH GREEN. COLLECTION

Approximate inclusive dates 1817-1877

Date of receipt See Provenance Statement  
                  on separate sheet

Received from See Provenance Statement  
                  on separate sheet

Volume on arrival NA. Artificial collection formed over a century

Number of boxes (after reboxing) 1 FB (.25 l.f.)

Condition Good

Restrictions Documents available in photostats are the property of the institutions, the  
                  names of which are stamped on the photostats' versos. Readers must apply to  
Description the indicated institutions for reproductions.

See attached sheet

Special Formats ☐ Photographs ☐ Maps ☐ Audio Tapes ☐ Films ☐ Graphics  
☐ Artifacts ☐ Machine-readable records  
☐ Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

Temporary catalog card added entries

x Cogswell, Joseph Green, 1786-1871

Everett, Edward, 1794-1865

x Astor Library (New York, N.Y.)

Accessioned by CF

x Round Hill School (Northampton, Mass.)

Harvard University. Library.

Date March 3, 1989

Göttingen. Universität

## JOSEPH GREEN COGSWELL COLLECTION

### Biographical Note\*

Joseph Green Cogswell (1786-1871) was an educator and librarian who became the first superintendent of the Astor Library.

After graduating from Harvard College in 1806, Cogswell pursued a few careers: merchant, in Southern Europe; lawyer, in Belfast, Maine; and Latin tutor, at Harvard. He traveled in Europe from 1815 to 1820, studying from 1817 to 1819 at Göttingen University, along with his friends Edward Everett and George Ticknor.

Cogswell was appointed librarian and professor of mineralogy and geology at Harvard in 1820, but resigned the posts due to lack of administration support in 1823. In that year, he and George Bancroft opened the Round Hill School, modeled on the German gymnasium, which closed in 1834.

He served as tutor to the children of Samuel Ward in New York City from 1836 to 1838 and was the owner of the New York Review from 1839 to 1842. He began advising John Jacob Astor on the establishment of a large public library in New York during this period. Cogswell was appointed superintendent of the Astor Library by its trustees in 1848. In this capacity, he supervised the purchase of books, the construction of the library building, and the compilation of a catalogue for the collections. He resigned the position in 1861 on account of ill health, yet worked for years afterwards on a supplement to the library catalogue, completed in 1866. He died in Massachusetts in 1871.

### Description

The Joseph Green Cogswell Collection is an artificially assembled group of papers spanning the years 1817 to 1877. It consists of ten original documents and several folders of photostats. The original documents are chiefly letters to and from Cogswell and span the years 1817 to 1861. Cogswell's 1817 and 1819 letters describe life at Göttingen. An 1852 letter from Edward Everett discusses the Astor Library and its proposed acquisition of the Gråberg library. The photostats are of original documents at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Harvard University, the Library of Congress, and the Boston Public Library, which were created in the years 1821 to 1837 and 1877. These are also mainly letters and pertain to Harvard and Round Hill affairs, as well as other matters concerning Cogswell. An 1877 letter discusses Cogswell's grave.

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### NYPL Related Material

NYPL Archives, Astor Library Record Group

Bryant-Godwin Papers

Duyckinck Family Papers

Samuel Ward Papers

\*SOURCE: DAB, vol. II

JOSEPH GREEN COGSWELL COLLECTION

Provenance Statement

ACCESSION #	DOCUMENT	DATE OF RECEIPT	SOURCE
41 M 127	A.L.S. of Cogswell, n.d.	11/19/43	Wormser (purchase)
50 M 149	A.L.S. of J. L. Motley, 1857	12/29/50	Bennett (purchase)
80 M 26	A.L.S. of Cogswell, 1861	9/9/80	Harry T. Friedman (purchase)
*89 M 24	4 A.L.S. of Cogswell, 1817-1819	4/12/1897	T. W. Higginson (gift)
*89 M 24	A.L.S. of Edward Everett, 1852	4/25/36	Holman? (purchase?)
*89 M 24	A.L.S. of Cogswell, 1824	unknown	Ford Collection
*89 M 24	Certificate from the New England Historic-Genealogical Society, 1858-1859	unknown	unknown
*89 M 24	Photostats	various dates	Massachusetts Historical Society Harvard University Library of Congress Boston Public Library